



SAN FRANCISCO: ART FOR THE CITY, A CITY FOR THE ARTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

San Francisco has long been a leader in the arts, nurturing generations of painters, sculptors, poets, novelists, playwrights, film-makers, and performing artists and innovators of every kind. Our symphony, ballet and opera are world-class. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art has become a leading cultural and architectural landmark. The Asian Art Museum has just opened to acclaim. The De Young Museum and California Academy of Sciences are similarly poised to become bright new beacons in the urban landscape. Our neighborhoods remain vibrant incubators for arts creativity, generating such visionary programs and exciting festivals as Litquake, Afrosolo, Carnivale, the Chinese New Year's Parade, the Precita Eyes mural program, the 826 Valencia children's writing workshop, the San Francisco International Arts Festival and more. City Lights Bookstore, the spiritual home of the Beat Generation, has been designated an historic landmark. *New York Times* critic Michael Kimmelman recently observed that the international arts community has yet to make a full reckoning of the contribution of the San Francisco Art Institute to the contemporary art scene.

San Franciscans expect a sophisticated and lively arts culture and have proven their willingness to invest in and patronize it. Our Hotel Tax Fund is a widely emulated model for providing a steady stream of arts support, and San Francisco continues to be a leader in arts funding nationwide. We recognize that the arts are an essential part of San Francisco's cultural vitality. And we also know that they directly contribute to our economic vitality as well. In order for the city to thrive as a center for economic entrepreneurship, a destination for tourism and convention business, and a model for urban community building, we must nurture a vibrant cultural scene and secure San Francisco's future as a haven for artistic creativity.

The arts give us our identity as a community; they also draw new people, fresh visions, and renewable economic opportunity to our community. *As Mayor, I will implement the following policy initiatives:*

- Acknowledge the importance of the arts to the economic and cultural vitality of San Francisco by working toward proactive solutions to ensuring a diverse and sustainable creative "base" and enhancing San Francisco's reputation as a destination for cultural tourism.
- Create the urban infrastructure of diverse housing opportunities, supportive transportation design, commercial storefronts, performance space, and working/manufacturing space that allow artists and cultural non-profits to keep a toehold in a competitive urban real estate market.
- Give planning priority to the creation of arts enterprise zones, especially in Mid-Market, the Central Waterfront and Bayview Hunters Point, and provide a structure of business tax credits to ensure their success.
- Include art as a crucial part of a broad-based campaign to improve the public realm by cleaning, greening and enhancing our streets and open spaces, making our city more welcoming, more distinctive and more delightful to residents and tourists alike.
- Improve art education opportunities for our children and youth, ensuring that the next generation will further contribute to San Francisco's historic role as a cultural capital.

THE ROLE OF THE ARTS IN THE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL VITALITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

POLICY BRIEF

America's nonprofit arts industry generates \$134 billion in economic activity every year – \$53.2 billion in spending by arts organizations and an additional \$80.8 billion in event-related spending by arts audiences. Including full and part time positions, the arts employ 2.7% of the American workforce. The arts account for 6% of the U.S. gross national product. Cultural activities attract tourists and spur the creation of additional facilities such as restaurants, hotels, and the services needed to support them. The Travel Industry of America estimates that “cultural tourists” spend one more day at their destinations and 50% more money than other tourists. Cultural facilities and events enhance property values, tax bases, and overall profitability. In doing so, the arts directly contribute to urban revitalization.

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Locally, the San Francisco cultural market is the third largest in the United States. This market is defined by the population of the metro area (6.8 million), the number of cultural non-profits (973), and the people per cultural non-profit (7,078) – the lowest ratio of the top ten markets, indicating a healthy mix of art opportunities. Our citizens have the highest median income of the top ten markets. Cultural tourism surveys consistently rate San Francisco's art industry as a core reason for visiting.

There are an estimated 10,000 full time employees in the non-profit arts sector in San Francisco with combined annual budgets of 300 million dollars. When such for-profit arts activities as the commercial film industry are factored in, even more powerful economic multipliers come into play. Commercial film-making companies spend money for film production and lodging production staff; they employ local talent for production and post-production work; they “sell” San Francisco to a world-wide audience through location scenes featured in such recent movies as “The Rock,” “The Hulk,” and “Princess Diaries;” and they provide the film-friendly environment that also supports a strong community of independent and documentary filmmakers.

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And yet, impact numbers alone can't tell the whole story of improved quality of life in urban neighborhoods resulting from arts and cultural activities and institutions: increased foot traffic which brings safety resulting from “eyes on the street,” enrichment of community service options such as outreach programs to public schools and youth centers, and a greater sense of community identification and pride.



Keith Haring, Untitled, 1989 • Moscone Center

Impact numbers also cannot adequately conceptualize the “creative capital” that attracts a skilled workforce and new businesses to urban centers that invest in supporting diverse lifestyles and cultural amenities. According to the *Arts & Business Quarterly*, the arts stimulate the economic revitalization of communities, develop skilled and motivated employees, foster a civil society, and can benefit businesses through increased brand-name recognition, product sales, community goodwill and positive visibility.

“The bottom line is that cities need a people climate even more today than they need a business climate. This means supporting creativity across the board—in all its various facets and dimensions—and building a community that is attractive to creative people, not just to high-tech companies. As former Seattle mayor Paul Schell once said, success lies in ‘creating a place where the creative experience can flourish.’ Instead of subsidizing companies, stadium and retail centers, communities need to be open to diversity and invest in the kind of lifestyle options and amenities that people really want. In fact you cannot be a thriving high-tech center if you don’t do this.” Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*

Our innovative and much-copied Hotel Tax Fund is a direct contributor to our “people climate,” enabling supportive funding of the large cultural institutions that attract regional, national and international visitors, and the mid-level and small cultural programs that give San Francisco’s cultural offerings richness, depth and diversity. Yet the Hotel Tax Fund has been severely impacted by the decline in tourism in the wake of September 11, 2001, by a continuing sluggish economy, and by perceptions of San Francisco’s dirty and inhospitable streets. This “triple threat” has led to reduced occupancy rates and subsequent lower hotel rates in general, thereby reducing the funding opportunities available through the Grants for the Arts program of the Hotel Tax Fund. In order to continue our strong record of local arts support, we must work to fill our hotel rooms and convention halls with visitors who provide both direct funding (by purchasing concert, theater and museum admissions tickets, and buying art and other offerings through galleries, museum bookstores and gift shops) and indirect funding (through the Hotel Tax Fund, and use of services and restaurants).

As Mayor, I will:

- Create a Cultural Affairs Office to coordinate the marketing of San Francisco as a regional, national and international arts/cultural destination. This office would: support the efforts of the Arts and Tourism Office of the SF Convention and Visitors Bureau to create a cultural calendar that showcases a different San Francisco cultural attraction for every month of the year; look at best practices here and elsewhere – *Arts Monthly*, the SFArts.org website, and the Arts Council of Silicon Valley’s recently launched artsopolis.com – to ensure that San Francisco’s cultural offerings are accessible in a visually exciting and timely form; and provide support for the creation of regional, national and international arts festivals, events, and expos to build connections between San Francisco and the world-wide cultural community.

- Charge the San Francisco Arts Commission and related city departments with creating a Master Plan for the Arts to maximize our arts and cultural investments and to ensure equity in the distribution of arts and cultural programs and resources city-wide.
- Create new cultural destinations within the city through art-conscious city planning and redevelopment, including making the proposed Mid-Market nonprofit/arts district a reality, reactivating the proposal to construct a new creative/educational campus at Pier 70 on the Central Waterfront, and completing city-funded arts improvements and enhancements in the Bayview Hunters Point district.
- Encourage the Resource Development Office that I will create to assist arts and cultural organizations in securing federal, state and private funding. Foster an ongoing dialogue about distribution of Hotel Tax Fund dollars across large, mid-level and small cultural institutions in order to reflect and reinforce the diversity of San Francisco's cultural offerings. Look carefully at viable strategies for incentivizing the support of local artists and institutions across large, mid-level and small arts and cultural organizations.
- Advocate for the re-funding of the California Arts Council as an important source of support for mid-level and small cultural institutions, multicultural and arts education programs.
- Revitalize the film industry by fully staffing the Film Office, and making San Francisco "film-friendly" by creating film production packages and enhancing production facilities at Treasure Island, the Presidio, Alameda and Mare Islands.

ARTISTS NEED GOOD URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE, TOO Like every group that makes up San Francisco's work force, artists and culture workers need a wide variety of housing options. They need affordable space to work and to showcase their work – rehearsal and performance space, studio and workshop space, galleries and storefronts. The only way to ensure this affordability in a competitive real estate market is by planning wisely for the City's future growth.

In order to provide an arts and culture-friendly infrastructure, San Francisco needs to foster employment and small business opportunities suited to a broad range of skills, ensuring that the broadest possible range of employers continue to do business in San Francisco. We need to make a commitment to enlivening our commercial districts with storefronts rather than the closed garage doors that all too often have characterized recent live/work construction. We need to build in cultural and community centers as a part of our "Better Neighborhoods" planning process. And we need to create new arts & culture "enterprise zones" wherever possible.

As Mayor, I will:

- Implement an integrated policy to address the homeless crisis and create a safe and welcoming public realm – making San Francisco friendly to cultural tourists and to residents and workers of the City.
- Work to preserve a core of well-paying, working class jobs in light industry and manufacturing. Work with the Planning Department to designate areas where businesses that "make things" are given first priority and may continue to thrive. Establish an economic development program to support new and expanding businesses with financing and technical support.

- Implement a workforce housing program to take the pressure off San Francisco's historic creative neighborhoods – the Mission, SOMA – by providing housing opportunities for middle-class residents making 120% or less of median income. Include artists in the definition of those groups identified as workforce housing constituents.
- Improve transit service and signage to serve the needs of cultural tourists. Prioritize the need to link arts-rich areas in future transit planning initiatives: for example, linking Fort Mason to the downtown gallery area, or to the Mid-Market creative enterprise zone through better transit options.

PRIORITIZE CREATIVE ENTERPRISE ZONES The arts can play a vital role in revitalizing neighborhoods, using and improving vacant space, bringing new jobs and new sense of opportunity, and improving public safety by generating more foot traffic and more eyes on the street. Such economically challenged zones as the faltering Mid-Market commercial area and the underutilized Central Waterfront industrial area should be prioritized as arts enterprise zones.

As Mayor, I will:

- Coordinate the competing decision-making processes at the Planning Department, Redevelopment Agency, Port Authority, DPW and elsewhere to allow such plans-in-progress as the Mid-Market redevelopment plan and the Central Waterfront Better Neighborhoods plan to move forward.
- Create a stable home for nonprofit organizations and the arts by planning for a true nonprofit/arts district in Mid-Market – with the city taking the lead in facilitating renovation and new development to provide dedicated nonprofit office and working arts/entertainment space in this area.
- Create a new creative/educational campus at Pier 70 in the Central Waterfront by working with the Port, MOED, Planning and local arts and educational institutions to develop a facility to provide skills training, creative arts education and incubator space for small producers, designers and craftspeople.
- Ensure the implementation of the city-funded renovation and expansion of the Bayview Opera House into a full-fledged Performing Arts and Multimedia Training Center, dedicated to the promotion of the visual, performing, musical and literary arts, and focusing on intensively preparing young adults for careers in arts-related fields. Support the creation of a Bayview Technological Arts Center, a performing arts and multimedia center, to prepare youth to participate more fully in the arts. The center will include a creative arts and technology studio providing after-school programs, classroom partnerships, and special projects.
- Bring real estate and property management leaders together to strategize how the arts can be leveraged to fill vacant storefront, office, and industrial space in these and other areas.



Ned Kahn, *Wind Portal*

- Look at opportunities to restructure the business tax credit system in order to diversify funding for the arts and target arts-related land use goals in these areas. The available business tax credits offered to San Francisco businesses are currently underutilized.
- Fund a micro loan program that will provide initial financing to small business ventures in the creative arts including media, fashion, graphic design, home furnishings, and more.

A PUBLIC REALM ENHANCED BY ART: Our Civic Center Plaza was conceived as a beaux-arts jewel. Coit Tower boasts an inspiring collection of WPA murals, the San Francisco Art Institute and the old Pacific Stock Exchange feature heroic paintings by Diego Rivera, the Mission District continues this proud mural tradition, and our waterfront has just welcomed a monumental sculpture by Claes Oldenburg. We have done much in the past to make art a part of our public realm, and we need to do more in the future. As Mayor, I will fully support my Arts Commission and its professional selection committees so that they can commission a full range of public art that is daring and, when appropriate, daringly traditional. San Francisco deserves art that is conceptually bold and community building, responsive both to its particular site and to the special character of our City as a place. We must make room for art that affirms who we are now, and art that leads us in new directions. Finally, we must ensure that concerns about quality of life issues in the public realm do not cause us to forego the substantial public benefit of art. If a fountain becomes a public nuisance, we must work to mitigate those nuisance factors, not destroy the fountain. The saddest city of all would be a city that chooses to have no art because “it just causes problems.”

“San Francisco deserves art that is conceptually bold and community building, responsive both to its particular site and to the special character of our City as a place.”

As Mayor, I will:

- Charge the SF Arts Commission with looking at best practices in American and international cities with vital public art programs (Seattle, Portland, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Diego, Paris, and Berlin, among others), and making a public report on these programs as a part of its arts education mission.
- Link the public art programs currently administered by the SF Arts Commission, the Redevelopment Agency, and the Planning Department under the curatorial supervision of an Arts Commission to which strong and broadly representative appointments will be made. Affirm the ability of the SFAC to fulfill a curatorial role that includes soliciting and recommending art projects of the highest caliber, and performing the education and public outreach functions necessary to ensure community-based consensus for these projects.
- Curate our current collection of public art more effectively by offering docent-guided tours and interpretive materials to make our already rich public art offerings more accessible.
- Fund a program for temporary art and performance-based art projects in the public realm to complement the placement of permanent art projects associated with capital improvements.
- Recognize the public role of artists in the city by instituting a series of awards for excellence, recognizing established and emerging artists and arts groups on an annual basis.

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE BY PROVIDING ARTS EDUCATION FOR OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

The value of an arts education is widely accepted, especially in California. An arts education helps build academic skills and increase academic performance, while also providing alternative opportunities to reward the skills of children who learn differently. Involvement in the arts engages kids in their community, improves self-esteem, reclaims at-risk youth, and builds the creative skills that are required of a 21st century workforce. In a public opinion survey conducted by the California Arts Council last year, 100% of the random sample of 593 parents stated that the arts should be part of every child's school experience.

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And yet, the dismantlement of the California Arts Council due to the state budget crisis directly endangers programs for San Francisco children and youth. Moreover, art, music, dance and other cultural enrichment programs are often targeted as “frills” – the first programs to be cut by a school district struggling to make ends meet. We cannot allow the SFUSD to fend for itself in this area. Instead we must work to mobilize support for art in the schools.

As Mayor, I will:

- Support the public schools in the search for private funding for the arts through a newly instituted Resource Development Office to assist the city in competing successfully for public and private monies.
- Recognize and reward already successful public-private partnerships and facilitate new ones to jumpstart a “barter economy” between public schools, artists and arts and cultural institutions. For example, performance space in a school auditorium could be provided to a dance troupe in exchange for dance programming at the school, or studio space for an artist-residency could be made available to a visual artist willing to help develop arts curriculum.
- Work closely with the Recreation and Parks Department to provide afterschool arts activities for children through an “art in the parks” program.
- Use the resources of the Mayor's Office to advocate for the re-funding of the California Arts Council.

CONCLUSION: The Mayor can set the tone for the City and effectively model the conviction that the arts are an essential part of San Francisco's cultural and economic vitality. As Mayor, I will be a public ambassador for San Francisco as an arts and cultural destination. I will also work to implement the policy objectives outlined above, ensuring that a commitment to art and cultural initiatives city-wide becomes a hallmark of my administration. Clearly, we must think beyond philanthropy to the arts community, instead embracing artists, art and cultural institutions as important business contributors to a vibrant and economically sustainable city.